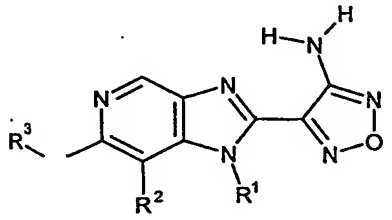
What is claimed is:

1. A compound according to formula (I) hereinbelow:

The present invention thus provides compounds of the general formula (I)



(I)

and physiologically acceptable salts wherein,

X represents O or R^3X represents F, Cl, or Br;

R^1 represents hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

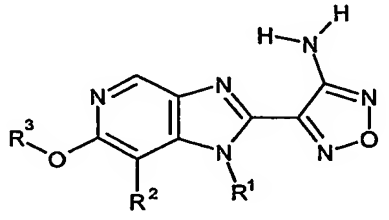
R^2 represents Cl, Br, or I, optionally substituted phenyl, heteroaryl, or $CONR^4R^5$;

R^3 represents C_{1-6} alkyl, optionally substituted by a group selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted phenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, NH_2, R^4R^5N, acylamino, hydroxy, CO_2R^4, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, NR^4CSR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$, and $OalkNR^4R^5$ optionally substituted phenyl, heteroaryl, or heterocyclyl;

R^4 and R^5, independently represent a group selected from hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkylalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, heterocyclyl and heterocyclylalkyl;

alk is a C_{2-4} straight or branched alkylene chain.

2. A compound according to claim 1 having general formula (II)



(II)

and physiologically acceptable salts wherein,

R^1 represents C_{1-4} alkyl;

R^2 represents optionally substituted phenyl or $CONR^4R^5$;

R^3 represents optionally substituted phenyl or heteroaryl;

R^4 and R^5 independently represent a group selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted C_{1-6} alkyl, optionally substituted C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, optionally substituted C_{3-7} cycloalkylalkyl, heterocyclyl and heterocyclylalkyl, or R^4 and R^5 together form a ring.

3. A compound according to claim 1 selected from the group consisting of 4-{1-Ethyl-6-[(4-fluorophenyl)oxy]-7-phenyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

4-{1-Ethyl-7-(4-fluorophenyl)-6-[(4-fluorophenyl)oxy]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

4-{1-Ethyl-7-{3-[(ethylamino)methyl]phenyl}-6-[(4-fluorophenyl)oxy]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine; and

4-{7-{[(3*S*)-3-Amino-1-pyrrolidinyl]carbonyl}-1-ethyl-6-[(4-fluorophenyl)oxy]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine.

4. A method of inhibiting Rho-kinases comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a safe and effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

5. A method according to claim 4 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure, ischemic angina, cardiac hypertrophy and fibrosis, restenosis, chronic renal failure, atherosclerosis, asthma, male erectile dysfunctions, female sexual dysfunction and over-active bladder syndrome, stroke, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, inflammatory pain, rheumatoid arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's diseases, indications requiring neuronal regeneration, inducing new axonal growth and axonal rewiring across lesions within the CNS, spinal cord injury, acute neuronal injury, Parkinsons disease, Alzheimers disease, cancer, tumor metastasis, viral and bacterial infection, insulin resistance and diabetes.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure, ischemic angina, asthma, male erectile dysfunction, female sexual dysfunction, stroke, inflammatory bowel diseases, spinal cord injury, glaucoma and tumor metastasis.

7. A method according to claim 5 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure and ischemic angina.

8. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 1 and a suitable carrier.